**Purpose and Goal**
Our goal is to help Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (SPHTM) students and employees lead by example by increasing daily physical activity through increased stair usage.

**Introduction/Justification**
Obesity is a leading public health concern now and will continue to be in the future. With excess weight comes increased risk for chronic diseases such as hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and cancer. Just two minutes of stair climbing each day can burn enough calories to prevent one pound of weight gain per year by the average American (1). Additionally, stair climbing has been shown to raise good cholesterol, lower bad cholesterol and reduce blood sugar (1). And one study has shown that men who climbed at least 20 flights of stairs a week (4 flights a day) had a 20% lower risk of stroke and death from all causes (1).

As future public health professionals, Tulane students should lead by example by regularly taking small steps to improve their own health. The Tidewater building itself, home to SPHTM, offers daily opportunities to add small amounts of physical activity through regular stair usage. The following proposal seeks to work within the existing infrastructure at minimal cost to create a positive impact on our school environment and the students and employees who study and work at Tidewater each day.

**Potential Positive Impacts of Increased Stairwell Use**
1) Improve efficiency of elevator usage
2) Increase regular physical activity leading to improved physical health
3) Increase student/worker creativity and productivity
4) Ensure safety by knowing the location of stairwells in the event of an emergency evacuation

**Existing Research and Best Practices**
- Motivational signage placed at the point-of-decision are useful in increasing stair usage in most settings (2)
- Messages containing “specific consequences” are more effective at increasing stair usage than “general descriptions” and should be supported by a recognized health source/research body (2)
- Once signs are removed, stair usage generally drops back to near baseline levels (3)
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “StairWELL to Better Health” cited five elements to a successful program (4), including: increase awareness; enhance skills; provide opportunities for trial behavior; create a supportive social environment; and create a supportive physical environment

**Proposed Strategies to be Implemented at SPHTM**
- Motivational signage placed at each bank of elevators on all floors as well as near the staircase doors themselves.
  Signs will emphasize specific and supported health benefits of stair usage and focus on short trips between floors, i.e. “two up, two down” usage. (Increase awareness)
- Ensure proper functioning of lighting on all levels
  Lights on certain floors are either not functioning or not functioning properly and are not conducive to safety and enjoyment of stair usage. (Create a supportive physical environment)
Long-term improvements, for future implementation, could include beautification of the stairwells, including improving and adding to the existing murals, new light fixtures, and new paint; key card access to the first floor stairs; and incentivization of stair usage.

### Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Signage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Quantity*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sign Printing**</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mountable Frames***</td>
<td>$3.99</td>
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<td>$159.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The quantity was determined but assuming placement of signs in elevator lobbies and stairwell doors on each floor, 5-24, near the main elevators (those that travel all the way to the 24th floor).

** Quoted by FedEx Office, 555 Canal Street, includes full color printing on glossy paper. Quantity discounts may be available.


**** It is assumed that any repairs to or replacement of lighting fixtures will being covered by building maintenance and therefore are not included in this program budget.
References


